THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Sir, in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, 226 applications were pending for allotment of STD/ISD/PCOs during the last two years but no application was pending for allotment of STD/ISD/Telephones during the said period.

(b) Steps taken to clear the pending applications include increase of the exchange capacity, provision of more number of channels, expansion of external plant etc.

New lechnology for VPTs in Arunachal Pradesh

2595. SHRI NAB AM REBIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have formulated any comprehensive scheme for the new technology options for Village Public Telephones in the country, particularly in Arunchal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government have formulated a comprehensive plan to induct new technologies in rural telephony including Village Public Telephone. These are Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) CDOT Point to Multi-Point System (CDOT PMP) and satellite-based telephones for remote and inaccessible areas in the country over and above the conventional technology of under ground cables.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

E-Post Service

25%. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Posts has launched a new service, "*E-Post Service";

(b) if so, the details thereof and the various facilities the service is intended to provide;

(c) since when, the new service has been started and the States covered thereunder;

(d) whether Government have received any feedback as to the utility of the service and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the E-Post Service is likely to be extended to the rest of the country and if so, by when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAP AN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department of Posts has launched a new service called e-Post on a pilot basis.

(b) and (c) The e-Post service allows members of the public to send e-mail to persons who do not have PC/Internet facility. e-Post service was started as a pilot project on 2nd August, 2001 in the five States of Gujarat, Aridhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Goa for a period of six months, 203 post offices have been identified where messages sent from any part of the world could be received, printed and delivered by postman. Members of the public in these five States can also send e-Post/e-maii by booking them at these e-Post centres to any recipient either in India or aboard.

(d) e-Post is available on the dedicated website www.indianpostoffice.net The website has attracted considerable public interest with an average of 25,000 visits at the website per day. So far more than 2,500 people have registered for this service.

(e) The e-Post pilot project shall be reviewed and depending on the result of review, a decision as to its extension to the rest of the country will be taken.

VSNL entry into National Long Distance Telephones

2597. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that VSNL is planning to enter into the National Long Distance Communication System (NLD) and if so, by when it is likely to be made operational;

(b) whether the tariff would be competitive as compared to the existing tariffs of theBSNL;